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EDITED BY B. O. FLOWER.

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## A NEW DISEASE.

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BY ELBERT HUBBARD.

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CIVILIZATION (like success) has its penalty. Granting all the wonders that invention has wrought, and admitting our splendid progress along certain lines, the calm observer still sees that we have bought these things with a price. Have we paid too much? If you are not in haste let the future tell.

In civilized countries the state protects the individual, and thus through lack of exercise the individual in time loses the capacity to protect himself. Our forefathers, who wrestled with wind and storm and dared the elements, or faced wild beasts or savage men as wild, laughed at danger. They went into battle with stouter hearts than we take to the dentist's. We are so busy making money and so fearful about the money we have made, so alert and breathless for "facts," that what we have gained in height we have lost in girth.

As a consequence we have acquired a few things beside money and facts. Among these acquisitions are a whole host of diseases—exhaustion, paresis, nervous prostration and various brands of debility; each of which is presided over by many self-appointed specialists (like the gods of old) who offer us "consultation free." Several men have immortalized themselves by palming off on us brand new ailments and naming these diseases after themselves. As the Autocrat of the Breakfast Table has said, "Their names go clattering down the corridors of time like a tin kettle to a dog's tail." Who can conceive of the mischief that Dr. Bright brought about by boozing his disease!

Schemes for "self treatment" are thrust at us from the columns of every daily, and as we walk the streets we see in shop windows dainty little plush boxes containing hypodermic outfits, advertised as holiday presents. As we journey by rail announcements of "the only sarsaparilla" and "the

kind that cures" greet us from barn roofs that should be sacred to moss and silky gray shingles; we look out to enjoy the landscape, and we behold references to "that tired feeling" that give it to us. We take up the paper to read the doings of the great men of the earth, and our eyes light on pictures of worthy housewives who have gained a pound a day—or lost it, as the case may be. Pepsin, hypophosphites, bromide, cocaine, chloral, are sold on every hand. The opium smugglers are making such vast fortunes that they bid fair to rival in society the Coal Oil Johnnies.

The latest thing in neurotics is *paranoia*. No doubt it has always existed, but until a disease becomes popularized, so to speak, it cannot consistently lay claim to a technical name. The distinguishing symptom of this malady is fear. The victim is very sure that some one is plotting against him. *He knows it.* For many months this fear may be upon him and his intimate friends see nothing wrong in his manner. But he is alert, vigilant and on the lookout. Suddenly some day he sees his wife sprinkle a white powder in his soup. It is salt, but you could never convince him of that fact. He refuses the soup, and his life for the time is spared. Next day he slyly exchanges his cup of coffee for hers. She does not drink all of her coffee—he knows why, but keeps the information to himself. Certain conspirators come to his house in the disguise of rag-peddlers, milkmen, etc.; he sees them and mentally makes note. He observes these men afterward on the street but they pretend not to see him; they turn their backs and walk away. He confronts them, they are astonished and protest their innocence—"just as the guilty always do."

The ropes are being drawn tighter around the helpless victim. He sees his children are eying him—yes, even they have joined the enemy. A neighbor comes in and assumes a friendliness that he does not feel; it can be seen in his eye. Relentless hate is on the poor fellow's track—ruin, disaster, disgrace, death. Sleepless nights follow days of hot anxiety, and one of two things happens. The unhappy wretch in frenzy strikes down his wife or son or neighbor who he imagines is about to wrong him, or he flies to a distant city to elude his pursuers. Arriving there he detects still other villains on his track; breathless, with bloodshot eyes and blanched face, the cold sweat standing in beads on his fore-

head, he rushes into a police station and demands protection. He gets it; for every police captain has seen more than one just such case.

It is a well-known fact that when a man is in a condition ripe for suggestion he accepts the thought of another. So *paranoia* is often known to have its beginning in the suggested hate of some one else. It is possible for a whole family to become infected with the same hallucination. So many instances of this kind are to be found recorded in treatises on nervous disorders that it would be like platitude to give them here.

An insane idea may run through an entire community, as the hallucination of witchcraft did in Salem in 1692, when nineteen innocent persons were hanged on testimony that was deemed unimpeachable. The witchcraft fear found root in a soil already full of apprehension. A perusal of Cotton Mather's sermons will quickly show that he taught of a God of wrath who proposed to damn certain people and save others. This God was jealous, petty, trifling, capricious, and could be pacified only by certain things. People who believe in this sort of a Supreme Being have minds ready to be inoculated with any other combination of fear and hate that may be thrust upon them by a strong suggestion. Salem has made a stain on the pages of our history that will last even beyond the time when the United States of America lives only in legend and fable.

There are now strong symptoms of a social *paranoia* to be seen in certain parts of our country. If the antidote is not given it may become a scourge that will hold our fair name up as a byword and a hissing before the civilized world. This disease has found a favorable soil in many sections, especially in the rural districts of the West. The widespread financial depression has hit the farmer hard. The rustle of the mortgage has sung in his ears night and day, and visions of a gigantic summons and complaint, backed up with writs of ejectment, have haunted his dreams. And no matter how much they claim that the tears of pity have put out the fires of hell, yet the good old doctrines of "total depravity," "endless punishment" and the angry God are still preached throughout the land. Bad legislation, bad crops and bad theology are a trinity of bad things. The result has been that a condition favorable to a suggestion of

hate and fear has been prepared; and the suggestion has come.

A year ago I was visiting an old farmer friend in Illinois, and very naturally the talk was of the great Fair. Was he going? Not he—he dared not leave his house a single day; did I not know that the Catholics had been ordered by the pope to burn the barns and houses of all heretics? It sounded like a joke, but I saw the gray eyes of this old man flash and I knew he was terribly in earnest. With trembling hands he showed me the pope's encyclical, printed in a newspaper which had a deep border of awful black. I tried to tell this man that Pope Leo XIII. was a wise and diplomatic leader and probably the most enlightened man who had been at the head of the Roman church for many years; and by no human probability could he do a thing which would work such injury to the Catholics as well as the rest of humanity. (This pretended encyclical has since been proven and acknowledged a forgery.) But my argument was vain. I was taken to the two clergymen in the village, a Presbyterian and a Methodist; both were full of fear and hate toward the Catholics, with a little left over for each other. They were sure that the order to kill and burn had gone forth.

And so in many towns and villages as I journeyed I found this quaking fear. In many places men were arming themselves with Winchester rifles; many preachers never spoke in public without fanning the flame; A. P. A. lodges were rapidly initiating new members, and lurid literature which was being vomited forth from presses in Louisville, Chicago, Omaha and Kansas City was being sent out broadcast.

For a year I have endeavored to find proof that the Catholic church in America was arming and drilling men or countenancing such action, as so boldly stated by the leaders in the A. P. A. In many cities I have been given permission to search every part of convents, monasteries and churches where arms were said to be stored. In vain has been my search. I have used all methods known to detectives to find any Catholic in possession of orders to maltreat his neighbors. No request or suggestion or hint showing a desire to injure Protestants have I ever been able to trace to a Catholic priest, bishop or other dignitary. And it is now the conclusion of all unprejudiced men who have investigated the matter that the letters, "encyclicals," "bulls" and orders

which are being printed in various A. P. A. papers and purporting to come from the Roman Catholic church are flagrant forgeries.

The A. P. A. seeks to spread hate; it thrives by fear, and its only weapon is untruth. This broadcast sowing of falsehoods is doubtless done by men who are thriving by it politically and financially, and the real victims are the people who believe these outrageous stories, subscribe for the papers and pay dues to be initiated into the A. P. A. lodges. Yet whenever any one has taken up pen to try to stop the insane panic he has been greeted as "a Jesuit hireling." Occasionally, however, we get a clear note of protest from such well-known men as B. O. Flower, Washington Gladden and David Swing; men who have so placed themselves on record in the past that their attitude toward Rome cannot possibly be misunderstood.

As for myself I do not recognize the church of Rome as a "divine institution" any more than I regard the New York Central Railroad as such. I have just as much faith in the infallibility of Chauncey M. Depew as I have in that of the pope. Both are pretty good men as men go. When they met a few months ago they grasped hands, as all men should—as equals. Among other things Dr. Depew told his holiness that many of the Central's most faithful and trusted employees were loyal Catholics. And it is a fact that nearly one half of the men in the employ of railroads in the United States are communicants in the church of Rome.

Some weeks ago it was my privilege to ride from New York to Albany on the engine of the Empire State express. The engineer was a little, bronzed, weather-beaten man of near fifty. I showed my permit, and without a word he motioned me to the fireman's seat in the cab. He ran around his engine with oil can in hand, then climbed to his place and waited for the conductor's signal to start. I was watching, too, and back in the crowd I saw the hand swung aloft; at the instant, the engineer turned and made a quick motion as if crossing himself, seized the lever, and we were off. For exactly three hours the telegraph poles sped past, and we rolled and thundered onward through towns, villages, cities; over switches, crossings, bridges, culverts and through tunnels and viaducts at that terrific rate of a mile a minute. The

little man at the throttle looked straight out ahead at the two lines of glistening steel; one hand was on the throttle, the other ready to grasp the air brake. I was not afraid, for I saw that he was not. He spoke not a word, nor looked at me nor at his fireman, who worked like a Titan. But I saw that his lips kept moving as he still forced the flying monster forward.

At last we reached Albany. What a relief it was! My nerves were unstrung. I had had enough for a lifetime. The little engineer had left the cab and was tenderly feeling the bearings. I turned to the fireman:—

“Bill, why does he keep moving his lips when there at the lever?”

“Who—th’ ole man? Why, don’t you know, he’s a Catholic. He allus prays on a fast run. Twenty years he’s run on this road with never an accident—the nerviest man that ever kicked a gauge cock, he is, ‘swelp me!’”

Bill is not a Catholic, neither am I, but we do not ask whether the engineer who pilots us safely to our destination is Presbyterian or Baptist; we only ask that he shall be a man who knows his business and is willing to do it. And yet the A. P. A. are clamoring for the removal of all Catholics from the employ of railroad companies; and their oath of initiation requires that the candidate shall never give employment to a Catholic provided a Protestant can be found to do the work.

It is a somewhat curious thing that this hatred and insane fear of Rome is almost entirely confined to orthodox Protestantism. The Quakers, Universalists, Unitarians, liberals of all sorts and the “infidels” are not alarmed. But a reference to the A. P. A. papers will show a fine array of names of orthodox clergymen who are “waging the war.” And the more orthodox they are the fuller of fight they seem. “High church” talks extermination of Catholicism, but “low church” is not panic-stricken.

The persecutor and the martyr are of the same type. And in this case it is brother against brother—a family feud. The orthodox Protestant brother who is so busy organizing A. P. A. lodges is made from the same stuff as the hated Catholic. They are both “Christians” and both “sincere.” The distinguishing feature in the religion of each is that they teach that Jesus of Nazareth did not have a man for

his father, and that only by a certain belief in this Jesus can we escape perdition.

Show an Eskimo three horses, a black, a gray and a bay, and he can scarcely see any points of resemblance in them. But a skilful horseman will quickly detect that the conformation, temper and quality of endurance in each is about the same—in fact that they may all have had the same sire and dam. If you are selecting one of these horses for your own use, the expert judge will tell you to take your choice; they are all of one breed—it is only a matter of taste in color. So it is with these man-made religions (all formulated, organized institutions of every sort and kind are man-made). Calvinism, High Church Episcopalianism and Rome are all cut off from the same piece of cloth.

They all teach a mixture of superstition and morality with a dash of universal truth, but this latter is not insisted on. They have all persecuted and cried "Whoa" and "Stop thief" to progress. Art has suffered at the hands of Protestantism, science has been checked and thwarted by all, and on the hands of each is the blood of innocent men. Yet their purpose is to do good.

We know the excellent work of the Jesuits among the Indians: we know the lives of La Salle and Marquette. We know Francis of Assisi and the priests who have given their all to leper colonies and still other leper colonies scourged by vice and sin. Then we know of the splendid work of that army of women who toil without pay and who labor without hope of earthly reward in hospitals, asylums and wherever tender hands are needed. On battle-fields where "Christians" have gone forth to kill each other, their white flag of peace is always seen. They whisper words of comfort to the dying, they close the eyes of the dead, they straighten the stiffening limbs, and by their presence lend a show of decency to the last sad scenes.

Then we know the good work of the Protestants. We know their Chautauqua circles, the Society of Christian Endeavor, the W. C. T. U., the College Settlements, the Asylums, Hospitals and Homes. Catholic and Protestant alike pray to one God, and He who hears the cry of the nun as she watches by the bedside of the dying, hearkens also to the prayer of the Protestant mother.

The light of reason has recently sent gleams of glorious

truth through all religions. All are coming nearer together, and in many sections we see the dawning of a better day by the uniting of Christian people for practical progress. So be it. But we can go forward only as we leave hate behind. Let Protestants, Catholics and lovers of truth everywhere be willing to strike hands for good, and let us say as a united people, that in this glorious land there is no room for a secret society that seeks to spread broadcast hate and fear! For if we sow hate we must reap hate. We awaken in others the same attitude of mind that we hold toward them. "With what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again."